Notes ichtyologiques / *Ichthyological notes*

Occurrence of *Ophisurus serpens* (Anguilliformes, Ophichthidae) from Galician waters (NW Spain)

by

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RÉSUMÉ. - Signalement confirmé de *Ophisurus serpens* (Anguilliformes, Ophichthidae) dans les eaux de Galice (NO Espagne).

Un nouveau signalement de deux serpentons à nez long *Ophisurus serpens* est rapporté dans les eaux de Galice (NO Espagne). Cette espèce tropicale est rare et encore mal connue dans les eaux atlantiques européennes. Ce travail confirme sa présence dans les eaux galiciennes et établit le record géoréférencé le plus au nord de *O. serpens* en Atlantique Est.

Key words. - Ophichthidae - *Ophisurus serpens* - Galicia - New record.

The anguilliform fishes are composed of 15 families and 791 species (Nelson, 2006). The family Ophichthidae includes about 290 species, from which only five has been reported in European coastal waters (Quéro *et al*., 2003): *Echelus myrus* (Linnaeus, 1758), *Dalophis imberbis* (Delaroche, 1809), *Pisodonophis semicinctus* (Richardson, 1848), *Ophisurus serpens* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Ophichthus rufus* (Rafinesque, 1810). Only two of them, *P. semicinctus* and *O. serpens,* have been recorded in Galician waters (Bañón *et al*., 2010). However, whereas *P. semicinctus* is a southern species recently arrived in Galician waters (Bañón *et al*., 2002) the presence of *O. serpens* remained dubious for a long time. This species was first listed from Galician waters by López-Seoane (1866), without any description or data. In the next 144 years there have been no new records of this species from the area.

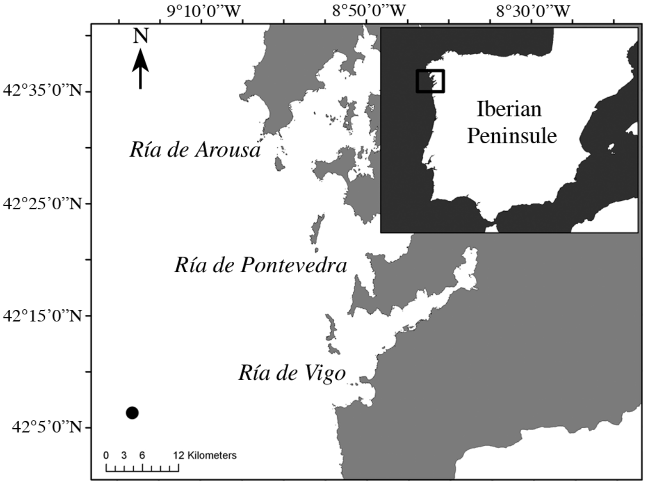

Figure 2. - Map showing the area and station where the specimen of *Ophisurus serpens* were captured.

Two specimens of *Ophisurus serpens* (Fig. 1) were caught by a bottom trawler at 191 m depth on 25 October 2010, 18 miles off Cabo Silleiro (South Galicia, 42º06'341 N; 009º18'215 W) (Fig. 2). The first specimen (1650 mm TL) was preserved in 70% ethanol and was deposited in the fish collection of the Museum Luis Iglesias de Ciencias Naturais of Santiago de Compostela (Galicia, Spain) with the reference number 6285. The second specimen (1850 mm TL) is stored frozen in the fish collection of the Instituto Español de Oceanografía in Vigo (IEOSV). Both are mature males, with sperm flowing from the genital open under pressure. They are identified as *O*. serpens on the following basis. Body scaleless, very elongate and cylindrical. Snout slender and conical with the upper jaw projecting. Large caniniform and curved teeth on premaxillae, small and biserial on maxillae. Small and uniserial teeth on lower jaw. Vomerine teeth uniserial, enlarged anteriorly. Anterior nostril small at midsnout. Posterior nostril a long opening covered by an upper flap, located on outer lip at midway between anterior nostril and anterior edge of eye. Eyes relatively small. Dorsal-fin origin

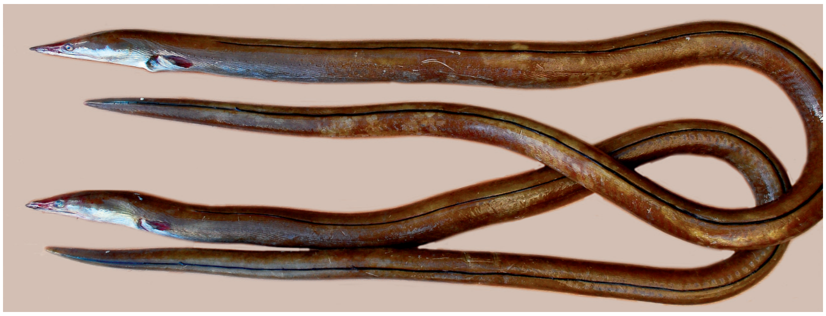

Figure 1. - Specimen of *Ophisurus serpens*, 1680 and 1850 mm TL, collected off Cabo Silleiro.

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Table I. - Morphometric and meristic data for specimens of *Ophisurus serpens*.

	L (mm)	% TL	L (mm)	% TL
Total length (TL)	1680		1850	
Head length	125	7.4	138	7.5
Snout length	34	2.0	41	2.2
Postorbital length	81	4.8	86	4.6
Eye diameter	10	0.6	11	0.6
Interorbital length	13	0.8	14	0.8
Mouth length	58	3.5	73	3.9
Gill slit length	17	1.0	20	1.1
Body depth	46	2.7	51	2.8
Body width	38	2.3	42	2.3
Predorsal length	173	10.3	195	10.5
Prepectoral length	131	7.8	146	7.9
Preanus length	652	38.8	702	37.9
Preanal length	663	39.5	715	38.6
Dorsal-base length	1487	88.5	1615	87.3
Anal-base length	989	58.9	1110	60.0
Pectoral length	30	1.8	33	1.8
Meristic				
Dorsal-fin rays	472		456	
Anal-fin rays	284		270	
Pectoral-fin rays	13		13	
Pores				
Lateral line (total)	195		198	
Lateral line (prepectoral)	9		9	
Lateral line (preanal)	74		74	
Ethmoid	1		1	
Supraorbital	4		4	
Infraorbital	6		6	
Preoperculomandibular	9		9	
Supratemporal	2		2	
Weight (g)	1650		2150	

slightly posterior to pectoral fins. Dorsal and anal fins ending near to the hardened caudal tip. Pectoral fins present, pelvic and caudal fins absents. Body coloration brownish-olive dorsally, silvery with yellow iridescences ventrally; dorsal and anal fins edged with grey; lateral and cephalic pores blackish.

The diagnostic features, meristic measurements and counts (Tab. I) are in general agreement with previous descriptions of the species (Blache and Saldanha 1972; McCosker, 1977).

Ophisurus serpens is widely distributed in the western and central Mediterranean and in the eastern Atlantic, from the Bay of Biscay to South Africa, including Madeira. The species is also reported elsewhere, such as in western Indian Ocean (Southern Mozambique to South Africa) and western Pacific (Japan and Australasia) (Ben-Amor *et al.*, 2009). However, Japanese authors consider the western Pacific populations to be a separate species, *O. macrorhynchus* Bleeker (Nakabo, 2002).

The present record confirms the occurrence of this species from Galicia (NW Spain), establishing the northern georeferenced record in eastern Atlantic. Cappetta *et al.* (1985) report two specimens landed in La Rochelle (France), but they did not know the exact catch location and biometric and meristic characters of these specimens were not included.

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